DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 142 UD 024 761

TITLE Minority Youth Unemployment: Barriers to Success in the Labor Market. Report on a Public Hearing by the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations.

INSTITUTION Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, Calif.

PUB DATE Sep 85

NOTE 27p.

PUB TYPE Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Career Guidance; *Education Work Relationship; *Employment Opportunities; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Minority Groups; Racial Discrimination; Secondary Education; Sex Discrimination; *Urban Youth; Vocational Education; *Youth Employment

IDENTIFIERS *California (Los Angeles)

ABSTRACT

This report provides findings and recommendations on youth unemployment that were presented at a public hearing conducted by the Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations. First, the report summarizes the testimonies of 20 youth from schools, community based organizations (CBO's), and job training programs who described their difficulties in obtaining employment and promotion opportunities. The youth's testimony, it is said, indicated that minority youth unemployment has four root causes: (1) discriminatory employer practices in hiring and on the job treatment; (2) inequities and failings of the educational system, including vocational education; (3) location of job resources outside of minority communities; and (4) failure of parents, teachers, and counselors to motivate and instill self-esteem in students. The principal recommendations offered by the students are outlined, followed by summaries of the presentations and recommendations of the six adults who testified at the hearing. The principal commission finding reported here is that employment discrimination against minority youth appears to be widespread. Minority youth perceive that many parents, teachers, and counselors have not provided sufficient guidance, support, and encouragement for them to achieve academically and pursue meaningful careers. There is insufficient coordination between school, government, CBO's, and the private sector in the area of youth employment. Two appendices provide statistics on youth employment in 1985 and an assessment report by Monte E. Perez on the role of the United Way in solving minority youth employment problems. (KH)

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MINORITY YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT:

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS IN THE LABOR MARKET

ED267142

UD 024761

A Report by:

Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

September 1985

MINORITY YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT:

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS IN THE LABOR MARKET

Report on a Public Hearing by the
Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

September 1985

Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations
320 West Temple Street
Suite 1184
Los Angeles, California 90012

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Acknowledgments

This hearing project was accomplished by the following Human Relations staff: Zara Buggs Taylor, and Cruz Ramirez organized and coordinated the hearing with the assistance of Frankie Maryland, Jane Serlin, Reva M. Trevino, and Keith Umemoto. Grace M. Löwenberg and Linda Rojas provided support services and clerical assistance. Jay Harber, Bunny Hatcher and Jerry Hatcher recorded the hearing and prepared notes of testimony. The report was written by Zara Buggs Taylor and typed by Grace M. Löwenberg. The hearing was carried out under the overall supervision of Lionel Martinez.

The Commission is especially indebted to the twenty-two persons who testified at the hearing and whose names, organizational affiliation and/or school are listed at the end of the report. The Commission thanks the Los Angeles County Office of Education for the use of its Board Room and for its general assistance and support.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, held a public hearing on Minority Youth Unemployment on February 4, 1985.

Statistics indicated that minority youth unemployment was approximately twice that of majority youth unemployment. The California Department of Employment Development reported an overall youth unemployment rate of 19.5 percent (ages 16 to 19) in September 1984. Minority youth unemployment had reached 50 percent in some areas of the County. (Unemployment rates remain at similar levels as this report is released. See Appendix 1.)

Youth from high schools, community based organizations, and job training programs testified about their difficulties in obtaining employment and promotion opportunities due to what they perceived to be discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, religion, and national origin.

The purpose of the hearing was fourfold:

- To attempt to determine to what extent discriminatory practices by employers have caused high unemployment of minority youth;
- To explore possible deficiencies in the educational system, such as the lack of information on job preparation and job entry techniques;
- To examine how the location of job resources affects minority youth employment;
- To elicit recommendations about ways to achieve workable solutions to the problem.

The hearing took place at the Los Angeles County Education Center in Downey and was attended by approximately 100 people, including numerous newspaper, radio, and television reporters.

Sixteen young speakers reflected the ethnic diversity of the County. Additionally, there were six adult presenters, two of whom summarized the views and recommendations of the hearing. Also considered in the report is written testimony from four students unable to participate at the hearing due to illness.

This report is a digest of presentations and includes only the principal recommendations offered in the testimony. The full text of all presentations and recommendations, or an outline where a full text was not available, is on file at the Commission and available to the public. The views expressed at the hearings obviously were those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect those of the Commission.

Based on the testimony, past experience and knowledge, and the additional interviews, the Commission believes the views presented are representative of minority youth throughout the County. Although the speakers were often presenting personal undocumented views, the Commission believes that perceptions are often as important as factual data, and has taken this into account in developing its own findings and recommendations.

Evaluation

Minority youth unemployment remains one of the most intractable problems in our nation and our County. Much has been written on the subject, and many potential solutions have been offered. Among the most recent reports is one presented by United Way of Los Angeles earlier this year. In a few pages, it summarizes current issues and programs, and makes a number of excellent recommendations. (See Appendix 2.)

The Commission on Human Relations, as a result of one hearing, cannot say much that has not been said before. The Commission hearing, however, did elicit some unique insights.

It provided an opportunity for young people to relate their very personal experiences, which offer a human and affecting contrast to the scientific and bureaucratic language of much literature on youth unemployment. These experiences also indicate that racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination continue to be significant factors in the job world, and the anecdotal evidence suggests that programs to reduce minority youth unemployment will be unsuccessful unless they take this into account. Finally, the hearing captured the idealistic expectations that young people still have for their teachers, counselors, and parents, expectations that too often have been disappointed.

Commission Findings

1. Employment discrimination against minority youth is perceived to be widespread, in both hiring and on-the-job practices.

2. Sufficient numbers of well-trained, sensitive career counselors in the public schools are a critical requirement if minority youth are to advance in the job market.

3. There is a common perception among minority youth that many parents, teachers, and counselors have not provided appropriate guidance, support, and encouragement for them to achieve academically and pursue meaningful careers.

4. The location of jobs outside minority communities, and related transportation problems, have made it difficult for many minority youth to find meaningful employment opportunities.

5. There is insufficient coordination between schools, government, community based organizations (CBO's), and the private sector in the area of youth employment. Model cooperative vocational programs seem to result in more accurate planning for future employment needs by students and a general increase in job opportunities for minority youth.

Commission Recommendations

1. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors should request the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools to develop a comprehensive report on the 10 most outstanding career education programs developed by local school districts. This report should be made available to those other districts, including many of the largest in the County, that currently have inadequate career education programs.

2. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors should request the California State Department of Fair Employment and Housing to develop an effective youth outreach project, informing youth about employment discrimination and their legal rights when confronted with it.

II. SUMMARY OF YOUTH TESTIMONY

Overview

The presentations and written testimony submitted by students indicate a shared perception that minority youth unemployment has four root causes. They are, in order of importance:

- Discriminatory employer practices in hiring and on the job treatment;
- Inequities and failings of the educational system, including vocational education;
- Location of job resources outside of minority communities;
- Failure of parents, teachers, and counselors to motivate and instill self-esteem in students.

Discriminatory Employer Practices

Hiring Practices

Differential treatment and unfair hiring practices by employers and personnel managers were cited most frequently throughout the youth testimony as the primary causes of minority youth unemployment.

Several Black and Hispanic students reported the following experiences when looking for a job:

- Calling to inquire about a job and being asked their race over the phone;
- Showing up for an appointed interview and then being told that the job had been taken;
- Never receiving a promised return phone call after having submitted an application and/or having been interviewed by personnel officers.

Several applicants made follow-up calls and were told the job was filled. No offers were made to contact them in case new positions came up or to keep their applications on file.

A Black youth, representing the Watts Skill Center, testified that in several instances Whites applying after him were hired when he had been told that the job was already filled or was not open at all.

Some young people felt they were treated coolly, but rarely rudely. In one instance, a young Hispanic male reported that the interviewer tried to convince him that although he was qualified for the job (airport food service), he wouldn't like it. He was not hired.

A Black female trainee at La Puente Valley Adult School explained that many qualified minority youths are told they cannot be hired for lack of sufficient past experience, but that many times this is an excuse to get around hiring a minority person.

A young Black woman, who was a recent Pomona High graduate with four years work experience in retail sales, was told by a personnel manager that she didn't have enough experience for a sales-buyer job. But she was hired for the same job when an employment agency got involved, called the store, and sent her back, demonstrating that employers are more reluctant to discriminate when a third party may become aware of their practices.

Where one Black student inquired about employment at the Long Beach Mall, the White personnel manager told her they would be hiring soon, gave her an application, and asked her to bring it back. She did so the next day only to be told by a second White woman that no jobs would be available for two to three months.

An Hispanic teenager attending Lynwood High School reported that he applied for jobs as a grocery bagger and stockboy at a department store in Torrance for three successive summers (beginning at age 15) and was told on each occasion by personnel that he was too young. Later, upon inquiry, he was told by White youth working there that they were 16, one year younger than he was at the time he first applied.

A young Hispanic ex-gang member, representing Long Beach Community Services, felt that many employers perceive minority youth as being gang affiliated, so even if they are qualified to do a job, they are rarely given the opportunity.

One presenter felt there is still a tendency for employers to hire only "token" Blacks. Another speaker, who worked for a major retail outlet chain, reported that the company employed no Black managers in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties.

Hispanic students said that employers consistently question their immigration status and are reluctant to hire them even after they have obtained proof of citizenship and other required documents.

A junior at Compton High School, representing the Youth Action Center for Positive Changes, testified he felt that there was a link between his being a new arrival in this country and his inability to find a job.

Several Hispanic and Samoan presenters felt that employers prefer not to hire youth who speak English with an accent.

An Orthodox Jewish student, who is a sophomore at UCLA and represented Jewish Vocational Services, reported that many employers refuse to hire Jews who cannot work on the Sabbath (Saturday), although many times they could schedule around it. Additionally, many employers object to dietary

restrictions and traditional dress. Consequently, many Orthodox Jewish youth will only seek employment with Jewish agencies and businesses which have demonstrated acceptance of them.

There were indications of some degree of intergroup tension and competition in the job market.

Several presenters referred to Black-Korean tension in South Central Los Angeles and to the perception by Blacks of increased Asian ownership of property and businesses in that area. There was criticism that some Asians will hire only other Asians. Other speakers also believed that employers prefer to hire Asians as opposed to other ethnic groups.

Still another presenter told of an incident involving a Samoan friend who was denied a job by a "colored" fashion store owner and felt it was discriminatory.

Therefore, it appears that discriminatory employer hiring practices are not confined to the majority group in Los Angeles County.

On-the-Job Treatment

Experiences with overt discrimination and racial slurs were described by a Black female student from Gardena High School who told of numerous racial incidents observed and experienced at her place of employment, including the White store manager referring to Black customers and employees as "niggers."

The same Gardena student testified that the East Indian store owner for whom she works hires and pays his friends higher hourly wages than Blacks. Blacks are paid below the minimum wage and are not given monthly raises, as are the non-Black employees. She also reported that the owner had arbitrarily reduced the hours on her time card.

Many presenters testified about the minimum and below minimum wages that most employers are accustomed to paying youth in general and minority youth in particular

A young Hispanic woman, who attends San Fernando High and represented Community Youth Gang Services, related that the supervisor on her job at a major amusement park often required her to work unscheduled overtime until twelve midnight and two o'clock in the morning on school nights, although White female workers were not required to do so. She said she was assigned work usually performed by those in a higher job classification, but was not paid at that level.

Students generally felt that employers promote White youth to supervisory levels more quickly and frequently than minority youth. Several presenters reported being passed over for promotions in favor of Whites and said that employers often release minority youth before they must promote them.

Another form of discriminatory on-the-job treatment described by students was sexual harassment and, to a lesser extent, religious harassment.

A young Black woman told of being subjected to overt sexual harassment by her supervisors. The student reported being touched, "patted on the behind," "grabbed and kissed," and propositioned. She felt promotions were blocked when these advances were refused.

A seventeen-year-old Hispanic female Lynwood High School student, with two years training and secretarial experience, related that she was approached by the White male owner of a copying business when she was in his store as a customer. He invited her to apply for a secretarial position, but during the interview several days later, he made it clear that part of the job would involve accompanying him in his private plane on weekend excursions. The young lady refused the offer and was not hired.

One presenter testified that many young Orthodox Jews are stigmatized by their traditional clothing and dietary laws and are subjected to teasing and harassment by co-workers on the job. Some are told that they must not wear yarmulkes (skull caps) as a condition of employment.

Inequities and Failings of the Educational System

Many young presenters alluded to disparate funding practices in the State educational system and felt that minority schools are generally short-changed. For that reason, they said, there is a lack of required and important elective courses in both vocational education and in the regular academic curriculum.

Additionally, students were critical of the lack of essential classroom materials and equipment. For example, there are many computer classes without computers in minority schools, they said.

Youth generally felt that traditional academic education was both insufficient and ineffective in preparing students to find and keep a good job. They testified that there is no comprehensive teaching of "real world" skills.

Other students enrolled at vocational training centers funded jointly by the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and in Regional Occupational Program (ROPs), felt that their training was inadequate and that the centers lacked real follow-through in terms of helping students locate jobs and educating them about discrimination in the job market. Students felt that many young people lack the "how to" of getting a job, including dress and interview techniques.

Within the educational system, as it relates to minority youth unemployment, students agreed that teachers and counselors play a pivotal role. They largely felt that many people in these positions, at both Vocational Education Centers and high schools, were sensitive to issues and problems facing

minority youth in the labor market. However, the young presenters also expressed concern that a significant number of their teachers and counselors demonstrated a poor, non-supportive attitude that tends to discourage them from achieving or being involved in pursuing careers.

A young Black male trainee at the Watts Skill Center felt that teachers and counselors at some training centers lack necessary dedication and sensitivity. While praising the Watts Skill Center, he was critical of an ROP Training Center in Torrance where it appeared that his instructor may have cooperated with an employer in discriminating against him and other Blacks. Out of a class of approximately 20 students, the one White male, who was a friend of the presenter, was the only applicant who was interviewed and hired for a job at a local supermarket. The speaker's friend told him that he too was surprised at the way he was selected and thought it unfair. The store manager had not seen any of the applicants. It was the White male instructor who distributed the applications, told the White student he had been hired, and then drove the student to the supermarket, where he began work the same day.

Students expressed the need for more concerned counselors at each grade level. A speaker from year-round Belmont High School testified that there is only one career and one academic counselor for that school's 5,000 students.

Several speakers thought that career counselors did not help students to develop realistic expectations about the job market, and that students generally did not get help to do whatever was needed to get a job. For example, one student reported that her academic counselor never informed her about graduation requirements.

Some presenters felt that there is differential treatment of minority students by counselors. For instance, a young woman felt that some counselors "undervalue and underrate" Black students.

An Hispanic student with a "B" average, who is taking college prep courses at Roosevelt High School, said that a school counselor "steered" him away from a university and toward a community college for his undergraduate work. The presenter felt the counselor's advice was racially biased.

Such constant negative reinforcement by some teachers and counselors, it was said, makes success in a first job experience difficult for the minority student.

Location of Job Resources Outside of Minority Communities

Several presenters testified that the location of jobs outside of their local communities required them to travel great distances to look for work. Then, if fortunate enough to find a job, they faced the problem of daily or weekend transportation.

A young Compton resident said he felt employers were afraid to locate their businesses in that city because they viewed Compton as "too dangerous" an area. Another Compton student stated that the lack of jobs there caused her to travel by bus to a job in Long Beach.

Because she couldn't find work near her home in San Fernando, a young Hispanic woman said she took the bus every night to and from a job in Valencia.

Many young presenters expressed concern and dissatisfaction that most jobs open to minority youth in or near their communities offer minimum wages and are perceived by students as "low status."

Failure to Motivate and Instill Self-Esteem in Students

A significant number of speakers felt that many parents are not supportive, and are even neglectful of their children's needs.

One student referred to the "black sheep" stigma: kids are made to feel inferior at home, as though nothing they can do is right. They cannot overcome this and carry this feeling of inadequacy over into the school setting. The same young woman said that many youth over age 13 largely disregard their parents' advice.

For many minority students, speakers said, financial considerations and the family's need for the income produced by a job, any job, displace education as a priority.

Four young Black women, on the other hand, commented on the sustained support and encouragement of their parents as being a key factor in their achievements in school and on the job.

Students viewed the impact of teachers and counselors on youth self-esteem as extending beyond the realm of education. They generally felt most teachers and counselors fall far short of carrying out what students perceive to be an educator's duty to shape good attitudes about school and work. Students must be motivated, interested, and prepared to enter the job market.

Some students described themselves as "undertaught, underqualified and underpaid."

More than one-third of youth presenters testified that they believed most high school students were unmotivated. They felt this was due, to a significant degree, to the failure of teachers and counselors to encourage students to set higher goals and believe they could achieve them.

Minority youth confidence and attitude is so lacking, and discriminatory hiring practices by employers so widespread, that according to some of the testimony many potential employees believe they will face discrimination by employers and, therefore, may not persist in job seeking.

III. STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal recommendations offered by the students providing testimony appear below:

1. Employers, both public and private, should communicate and coordinate with schools to develop joint youth training programs, including time-sharing jobs and placement services. (The Rockwell International Program was suggested as a model.)

2. The Commission on Human Relations should develop a program with the public schools to help improve the employment prospects of minority youth by reducing fear, prejudice, and discrimination among employers.

3. More comprehensive vocational education programs should be available so that all courses required for good job performance are offered.

4. Schools should provide programs to foster a more positive attitude in students about themselves, school, and work. To accomplish this, schools should develop a comprehensive career program to acquaint students with the job market, equip them with personal communication skills, and prepare them to interview successfully for a position.

5. The State Department of Education should fund minority schools more equitably so that minimum classroom standards and equipment needs are met and the ratio of counselors to students is improved.

6. Teachers and counselors, both vocational and academic, should improve their own attitudes toward minority youth.

7. Parents should be involved with their children, establish relationships with counselors and teachers, participate in the academic and vocational decisions of their children, encourage them, and help them develop whatever skills are necessary to get and maintain the job of their choice.

8. Teachers and counselors should help all students understand what is needed to get a job and should help all students develop long range individual goals. When these goals include work experience, educators should plan how to expose students to the job market by networking with parents and others to locate jobs. They should advise youth who are already working about promotional opportunities and strategies for advancement.

9. More Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs) should be funded and extended to a broader youth population. More follow-up activities to help students find jobs after training should be implemented.

10. Schools should initiate a peer counseling program whereby young minority adults already in the job force talk to high school students about what to expect and how to prepare. Peer counselors should meet with business and industry to discuss future employment needs and available youth resources.

11. The Commission on Human Relations should recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it support legislation to require businesses to hire in such a way that the ethnic make up of the communities in which they are located is reflected in their work force.

12. The Commission on Human Relations should encourage the Board of Supervisors to develop and support measures designed to: prevent large companies from relocating to White suburban areas without providing a means to transport minority employees to the new job site; and attract government employment and construction projects into minority communities.

IV. SUMMARY OF ADULT TESTIMONY

Six adults testified at the hearing. Dr. Kathleen Moore and Mr. Frank Dominguez provided a response-analysis of the preceeding youth testimony. Three other adults supplemented student testimony and one, representing Project Heavy, testified independently.

Dr. Kathleen Moore, Director of Occupational, Vocational and Career Education, Pasadena Unified School District, discussed three issues in the area of Career Education:

- Access to information;
- Access to skills training programs;
- Access to funding for skills training programs.

Dr. Moore expressed concern that the students from Compton in particular had not been given adequate counseling about the extensive Regional Occupational Program (ROP) in that area. Compton has the largest ROP enrollment of the 21 participating Los Angeles County school districts.

A Career Assessment Profile should have been developed and discussed with these students by a counselor with a comprehensive course and/or vocational training plan.

The trend in education is steadily toward college preparation and away from job preparation. Even though only approximately 20 percent of high school graduates in many areas go on to college, about 80 percent are enrolled in college prep programs. Those students who meet the college entrance requirements will be actively recruited by colleges and universities and generally have access to scholarships and financial aid.

In sharp contrast, students who choose or are directed into vocational training programs have no required courses and rarely receive financial aid. Businesses send career speakers to address these students, but they don't offer jobs or financial incentives.

The perceptions of educators and young people alike that vocational education programs lack academic courses and prepare students for low-paying jobs serve to keep enrollment down.

Another constraint on access to vocational education is the scarcity of funding. The passage of SB 813 has placed an additional burden on school districts to provide more required college prep courses. Every student will be mandated to take them. Although the legislation provides that job entry skills be taught, there is no mention of funding for this type of training.

Dr. Moore commented that one of the positive things to come out of SB 813 is the counseling program, which begins with 10th grade students. The current ratio in most County districts is one counselor to 450 students.

Recommendations:

1. The schools should develop cooperative programs with area businesses to enhance curriculum choices and build a stock of much-needed classroom and lab equipment. The General Dynamics program in Pomona, where students get on-the-job work experience, could serve as a model.

2. The Commission on Human Relations should identify needs and recommend to the legislature and the State Department of Education methods to improve access to excellent vocational education for students who need job training and skills.

Frank Dominguez, Director of National Education Service Centers Inc., for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), testified that the schools are not addressing the real problems and needs of career education and development. Students are generally categorized as either "college-bound" or "low-level." Counseling is inadequate, with many counselors relying on organizations such as LULAC to direct students.

Universities and colleges are beginning to refuse to teach basic skills, he reported, and entrance requirements are going up. This closes out many minority students.

Vocational skills taught today will not apply in the year 2000; youth are not being prepared for today's job market, let alone that of the future.

Another serious problem is attitudinal. According to Mr. Dominguez, negative feelings about minority youth on the part of school personnel, coupled with societal stereotypes and low regard for workers in "non-professional" jobs, have led a disproportionately large number of these students into deficient vocational education programs.

The Los Angeles Unified School District is now more than 50 percent minority. The impact in the near future, as a large percentage of these students leave school unprepared for the workplace, will be devastating.

Recommendations:

1. The Commission on Human Relations should impress the Board of Supervisors with the need for increased awareness of, and attention to, the problem of minority youth unemployment in Los Angeles County, and should monitor discrimination in this area.

2. The Commission should recommend that schools initiate student-mentor partnerships in conjunction with business and industry.

3. The private sector should develop more job training programs and more good jobs, and should consider more than grade point average (GPA) when hiring.

4. Government agencies should develop more research programs on youth unemployment.

5. Community organizations should become involved with schools and develop role models for youth.

6. Career counselors should be trained how to prepare students to handle job interviews, complete job applications, etc.

7. The family should become more involved and informed about career choices and opportunities for youth.

The major recommendations of the remaining adult presenters were as follows:

1. High schools should poll students to ascertain the level of employment (regular and seasonal), location, pay, informational sytems utilized, employer hiring practices, and other information. This would help provide a needs assessment for counselors and administrators in order to improve career education.

2. The Commission on Human Relations should recommend to the Board of Supervisors that all independent County contractors be required to hire 5 to 10 percent unemployed youth as a model project.

3. A youth-oriented agency similar to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission should be established.

4. Because schools are not meeting youth training needs, other non-profit agencies involved with youth should be given job training contracts with school districts.

5. The Job Corps is largely ineffective because it involves the public sector only; high tech private sector jobs and training must be solicited.

HEARING PRESENTERS

Speaker	School/Organization
Diane Adams	Fairfax High School, LAUSD
LaJuana Butler	La Puente Valley Adult School, Hacienda-La Puente USD/West Covina High School, West Covina USD
Frank Dominguez	League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Director of National Education Service Centers, Inc.
Eric Escutia	Roosevelt High School, LAUSD
Randolph Fong	Roosevelt High School, Social Science Instructor
Norma Fualau	Office of Samoan Affairs/Carson High School, LAUSD
Mitch Hurvitz	Jewish Vocational Center/UCLA
Joseph Kemp	Watts Skill Center
Raul Lara	Project Heavy, Senior Job Developer
Mauricio Lopez	Lynwood High School, Lynwood USD
Francisco Martinez	Harbor City Teen Post/Reed Continuation School
Sané Mataitusi	Youth Action Center for Positive Change
Linda McNeese	Youth Action Center for Positive Change/ Dominguez High School, Compton USD
Zane Meckler	Fairfax High School, School-Community Advisor
Armando Xavier Mejia	Central City Action Committee/Belmont High School, LAUSD
Yolanda Mendoza	Lynwood High School, Career/Academic Counselor
Dr. Kathleen Moore	Pasadena Unified School District, Director of Occupational, Vocational and Career Education
Dawn Powell	Locke High School, LAUSD

Annette Robbins	Pomona High School, graduate, Pomona USD
Tim Sato	Belmont High School, LAUSD
Agaalofa Tautolo	Harbor City Teen Post, Long Beach Community Services/Omai Faatasi, Carson
April Turner	Gardena High School, LAUSD

Appendix 1

THE ROOSEVELT CENTENNIAL YOUTH PROJECT

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THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SITUATION
JUNE 1985

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Frank J. Slobig

- More than 8.4 million Americans are still unemployed in June, 1985. Over 37% of them are under 25. The technical unemployment rate for 16-19 year olds dropped from 18.9% to 18.3%. However, there were 590,000 fewer people working in June and 72% or 423,000 were teenagers.

- The percentage of employed teenagers dropped substantially last month from 44.2% to 42.3%. For whites the drop was from 49.0% to 46.3% and for blacks the drop was from 25.5% to 23.8%.

- The unemployment rate of black teenagers dropped from 40.4% to 38.1%, while the white teen rate dropped from 16.1% to 15.9%, still maintaining a substantial gap between the two groups.

- While over 7.3 million jobs have been created since the trough of the recession in November, 1982, teenagers, who represent 16.3% of the unemployed, have suffered a net loss of over 300,000 jobs.

- The teenage population declined by 11.5% between 1979 and 1984. The number of employed teens, however, fell by 20.3%.

- Only 23.8% of black and 33.2% of Hispanic teenagers are employed, compared to 46.3% of white teenagers.

- Only 9 of every 100 black teenagers have full time jobs.

- On average during 1984, 1.4 million teens classified as outside of the labor force expressed a desire to be employed on a part-time or full-time basis.

- The unemployment rate of 1983 black high school graduates (37.5%) substantially exceeds that of white high school dropouts (23.5%).

- A total of 243,000 20-24 year olds looking for work in 1984 had never held a full-time job before.

- There are 4.9 million 16 to 24 year olds with less than a high school diploma and not presently enrolled in school.

- Of the 3.3 million 20-24 year olds who are high school drop-outs, 40.8% of Hispanics and 23.2% of blacks in this age group fell into this category, in comparison to 14.6% of whites.

- Only 36.4% of the black graduating seniors in 1982 entered colleges, a substantial decline from 43% in 1980 and 1981.

Source: Most recent data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(OVER)

Minority Youth Unemployment and United Way of Los Angeles: Strategies for Future Action

An Assessment Project
Submitted to United Way of Los Angeles

Prepared by:

Dr. Monte E. Perez
President
Perez and Associates

January 14, 1985

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to assess the current conditions, problems, policies and programs, of minority youth unemployment in the city of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County. In this review we will define the dimensions of youth unemployment and examine whether or not United Way of Los Angeles and their member agencies have a role to combat minority youth unemployment. We will review the degree and type of participation United Way may want to assume to help solve this problem.

Minority youth unemployment is a problem of alarming proportions in the U.S. Youth unemployment ages 18 to 22 is 20 percent, while minority youth unemployment has soared between 50 to 60 percent. The highest unemployment rates are exibited among Black and Hispanic youth. Asian/Pacific Islander unemployment is increasing, particularly among the Indochinese and the Pacific Islander populations. Looking at the partterns within the United Way regions, we find region V contains the largest concentration of the unemployed. Black unemployment among all age groups is the highest with 56 per cent and 59 percent for females and males respectively. In the same region Hispanic unemployment exhibit 46 percent for females and 48 percent for males. Asians/ Pacific Islanders have a 41 percent female and 46 percent male unemployment rate. Minority youth unemployment ages 16-24, nationally experience similar patterns of unemployment, as depicted in region V. Black youth experienced a 42 percent unemployment rate in 1983. Hispanic unemployment rate was 31 percent in the same year. Minority youth unemployment is particularly disturbing given three factors: (1) the growth of youth population, (2) the rapidly changing work place, and (3) the social consequences that result from unemployment. By the year 2000 the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) estimates a 28 percent growth in population in the six major counties of Southern California. An estimated 14 million residents is forecasted. Given the current ratios of youth ages 14 to 21 there will be over 2.3 million youth seeking employment in the region. Minority youth will account for over 900,000 of these youth. There continues to be a high drop out rate among minority youth (25 percent). Inner city youth experience a high school dropout rate of 25 to 60 percent. Out of school youth will be in high risk. The rapid changes in the workplace will require greater collaboration, sophistication, and resources among the public and private sectors (business, industry, independent sector) to prepare youth for jobs. It is imperative for the public and private sectors to plan for this growth, since the consequences of unemployment often result in a number of social problems (e.g., juvenile violence, substance abuse) costly to society.

The economic and employment forecasts for the Southern California region seem promising. Over 2.7 million jobs are projected by the year 2000. The economy is on an upswing as a result of increased consumer spending. But to keep the economic growth curve will require an effective transition of new workers, including youth, into the workplace. The forecasts by government

and private sector differ somewhat and the reliability of these projections is open to debate.

Over the past 20 years there have been two major strategies attempting to solve minority youth unemployment. Training and accessing the job market have been two major vehicles to decreasing minority youth unemployment. Five major institutions have responded to minority youth unemployment. The first institution, government has focused on training and the need to move economically disadvantaged individuals into the job market. The federal government has initiated three major efforts over the last twenty years. These were the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA), the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), and now the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). State and local governments have received funding from the federal government to provide training and to access the job market.

The state governments now receive block grants from the federal government, allocating 78 percent of the funds to local Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) or municipalities, under JTPA. JTPA now requires a close working relationship with the private sector, giving them co-equal status with cities to decide on funding and types of programs to be established. Partnerships between the public and private sector are encouraged and the potential for job placements drive the funding decisions. The state also administers the Employment Training Panel (ETP) program. ETP provides funds for training of dislocated workers through the allocation of funds from the unemployment insurance program. This effort is much smaller. JTPA allocates over $160 million to jurisdictions in the State, while ETP administers a $12 million budget. JTPA is new, with only one year in operation. The City of Los Angeles, Department of Community Development and the Los Angeles County, Department of Community Services administers the JTPA program. They have approximately seventy providers each, primarily from the non-profit community based sector. The City plans to allocate $15 million and the County $8.9 million on youth programs during Fiscal Year 84-85. Several problems have come to the attention to city and county planners. Some of the salient problems include:

- o funds for support services (e.g., child care, crisis intervention) have been insufficient.
- o stipends and work experience funds are limited.
- o job forecasting has been less than reliable.
- o youth attendance and retention in training programs is declining. Without stipends, some youth are unable or unwilling to attend the training programs.
- o employers have little knowledge of JTPA and other programs that can provide financial assistance to hire youth.

The second institution involved in youth employment programs has been private industry. There are few programs sponsored by private industry that specifically target on youth. Most businesses donate monetary and technical assistance to on-going projects. "First Break," a program sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce to provide job referrals during the summer months, is an example of an on-going project they support. But there are some specific programs established by Northrup, TRW, and Pacific Bell. These programs are directly tied to the manpower needs projected by these companies. If youth programs are related to the specific manpower needs of industry, hiring tends to increase.

The unions have also participated to a limited degree in youth employment programs. Union activity is tempered by their desire to insure that union members are first to advance. But they have established some high school dropout and substance abuse programs. The primary role of unions is their participation in apprenticeship training and certification of acceptable apprenticeship programs.

The fourth institution involved in youth employment are the community based organizations (CBOs). They have been the traditional service providers in the MDTA, CETA, and JTPA efforts. They have focused on classroom and occupational training. Now with the stringent requirements of JTPA, close collaboration with the business sector is on the rise. The programs are generally effective, but limited due to the lack of funds. Annual costs to train youth in specific job occupations is approximately $3800.00 per person. These programs have been able to reach hundreds of youth, but there remain thousands who have been untouched.

The fifth institution, education has undergone a major reexamination in the last several years. In elementary and secondary education the emphasis has been on the basics. This emphasis has prompted a decline in vocational education and other work experience programs. The higher standards placed on the kindergarten through 12th grades by post secondary education institutions has contributed to the concentration of resources in the academics. There are a number of problems confronting the schools. Teacher development, lack of resources, and the lack of articulation between institutions of higher education and the elementary and secondary schools are three problems worth noting. Post secondary institutions represented by community colleges, State Colleges and Universities, and the University of California system have had problems increasing minority enrollment. Community colleges are facing some major problems with limited budgets, confusion over the local and state authority, and the widespread interest to redefine their mission.

The assessment identified several problems and gaps in minority youth unemployment efforts. The major problems include:

- o There continues to be a lack of focus or targeting on youth. Youth programs have been established but there is little discussion, strategy, and evaluation on the strengths and

weaknesses of these efforts.

- o There are an insufficient number of partnerships in the city and county. Partnerships between the public and private sector need to be encouraged and established on a wider basis.

- o Employment forecasts do not clearly indicate where the jobs will be for youth. A more detailed and scientific approach to forecasting may be in order. There is also a need to establish a mechanism for local forecasting.

- o There is no central place or mechanism for individuals and community agencies to obtain information on youth programs, including youth employment programs.

- o There is little coordination between youth employment programs and other youth efforts funded by the government or the private sector.

- o Minority youth continue to exihibit a severe lack of exposure to the world of work. Schools focus on the academics and spend an insufficient amount of time on real work situations.

The current efforts of United Way agencies focus on several employment strategies. There are approximately 24 agencies involved in youth employment programs. The services vary from providing employment counseling, training, placement, and other supportive services, (e.g. pre-job guidance, job search assistance, and services to specific groups suffering from social and economic disadvantage). In 1982-83, United Way agencies expended a total of $973,185 in employment services. In 1982-83 each region ranked their employment efforts. Employment procurement and employment assistance were the two major activities given the highest priority.

There are several options United Way may want to consider to participate in the resolution of minority youth unemployment. These options are proposed, recognizing that minority youth unemployment is indeed a massive problem. Government and private companies have poured billions of dollars in training and accessing the job market. United Way's efforts should be targeted and seek to make a difference with an appropriate level of activity and allocation of resources. The following options are proposed:

1. Developing Partnerships.

United Way would serve as the vehicle to inc ase partnerships in the city and county. Linkages betwe government, business, community based organizations, and th schools need to be established. United Way would act as the nkage point between these institutions. In addition United would sponsor a policy conference inviting the key actors t iscuss employment forecasting, program initiatives, and to ev: uate the effective-

ness of current efforts.

2. Funding for Support Services.

Funds are available from JTPA to provide counseling, crisis intervention, vocational guidance, and other support services for each training program. United Way would investigate the funding possibilities for their member agencies. United Way would train their agencies to pursue these funding opportunities.

3. Establishing a Youth Employment Service in Each Region.

United Way would establish a network of services to provide part time employment opportunities for youth. Using the existing network of agencies, youth would be directed to part time employment. Job development and counseling would be provided.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation.

United Way would monitor and evaluate youth employment efforts in each region, assessing the efforts of the institutions serving the region. An annual report containing the successful and less effective interventions would be helpful to the institutions involved in youth employmnent programs. The report would highlight the needs of youth and bring attention to the problem on a consistent basis.

5. Innovative Grants Program.

United Way would sponsor a mini-grant competition where innovative models would be funded. This would dovetail with the annual report on youth programs highlighting the innovative and effective models established throughout the five regions.

6. School Counseling Initiative.

United Way would enter into a partnership with the L.A. County School District and the Los Angeles City School District to provide additional counselors in high risk (drop out) schools. These counselors would be available for advisement, job development, and work readiness programs.

7. Provide Funding for Training.

United Way would fund employment training programs. These programs would focus on specific job training, basic skills, and job development.

United Way may want to establish one or several of these options simultaneously. Options 3, 5, 6, and 7 cost more, with option 7 requiring a heavier financial commitment from United Way.

All these options are viable and effective, if they are targeted to the local needs of high risk youth and contain spe-

cific objectives to achieve. The consultant recommends that a survey of the needs and problems of youth in each region be conducted, before any of the above initiatives are launched. This survey would interview over a 100 high risk youth and the United Way agencies serving them. The United Way agencies involved in youth employment programs would be examined to determine the types of activities that would enhance their program offerings and effectiveness.

The consultant further recommends that an implementation plan be developed before any initiative is undertaken. The plan would provide a set of objectives, timeline, and resources necessary to establish one or more initiatives.